

No. 1 The Plaza
Sonoma, California 95476-6618
Phone (707) 938-3681 Fax (707) 938-8775
E-Mail: cityhall@sonomacity.org



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May 26, 2009

Paul Kelley, Chair
Sonoma County Board of Supervisors
575 Administration Drive, Room 100A
Santa Rosa CA 95404

Re: City and County Land Use Decisions

Dear Chair Kelly and Supervisors Brown, Kerns, Zane, and Carrillo:

The Sonoma City Council is concerned that the County of Sonoma would ignore the unanimous vote of a City Council and its community and make a major land use decision contrary to that City's own determination, as evidenced not only by its immediate vote but also by its historical citizen vote adopting an urban growth boundary. Secondly, we are concerned that the County would force changes to its General Plan to accommodate this particular land use.

The project that has brought this serious issue to our attention is the application by the Dutra Group to build an asphalt production plant and recycling center at Haystack Landing at the southern entrance to the City of Petaluma. This location is within a few hundred feet of the Petaluma River and Schollenberger Park, one of the last wetlands of its kind in California, recognized by the Audubon Society as one of the top four new birding sites in the country. The City of Petaluma, the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, and the Coastal Conservancy have invested millions of dollars in protecting and enhancing this refuge. The citizens of Petaluma enjoy the many outdoor activities in this natural area along with an estimated 150,000 visitors each year. It is located within the City of Petaluma's Urban Growth Boundary and the Scenic Corridor of Highway 101.

Our Sonoma County cities have used urban growth boundaries to proactively contain, control, and direct growth to promote more compact urban development. At the same time, these boundaries protect our surrounding farmlands and other resource lands, such as parks, watersheds, and wildlife habitats, from inappropriate development. We use this planning tool to separate our urban areas with greenbelts.

We are very concerned that your vote could force the City of Petaluma and its community to accept this particular industrial use contrary to its own planning and its express vote asking you to deny this permit. Can the City of Sonoma and our community expect similar disregard of a future unanimous vote of our Council?

City and County relationships do inherently face some jurisdictional conflict but, to my recent knowledge, have never yet ended up with the County forcing a City to accommodate an unacceptable land use within its Urban Growth Boundary. Such an action would destabilize years of County and City cooperation. We urge you to respect the City of Petaluma and deny this permit application.

Sincerely,



Ken Brown
Mayor



Steve Barbose
Mayor Pro Tem



Laurie Gallian
Councilmember

cc:

Sonoma County Mayors
Sonoma County Planning Commission
Sonoma City Council